Claims

1. (Amended) A vent structure for deterring intruder access to a storage tank, comprising:

a bottom plate for connection to the storage tank wherein the bottom plate has a tank opening to allow gaseous flow between an atmosphere in the storage tank and an atmosphere within the vent structure;

a cover affixed above and to the bottom plate thereby forming the vent structure housing;

a vent opening formed through the bottom plate to allow gaseous flow between the vent structure's atmosphere and an ambient atmosphere surrounding the storage tank; and

a tortuous pathway disposed between the vent opening and the tank opening within the vent structure thereby allowing gaseous communication between the storage tank atmosphere and the ambient atmosphere surrounding the storage tank wherein the tortuous pathway further comprises a plurality of baffles.

2. (Amended) The vent structure of claim 1 wherein the ~~tortuous pathway further comprises a~~ plurality of baffles having at least one baffle extend upward from the bottom plate toward the cover and at least one baffle depend downward from the cover toward the bottom plate.

3. (Original) The vent structure of claim 2 wherein the tortuous pathway is formed by a first baffle extending upward from the bottom plate, a second baffle depending downward from the cover toward the bottom plate, and a third baffle extending upward from the bottom plate.

4. (Original) The vent structure of claim 1 wherein the vent opening is covered with a fine screen mesh.

5. (Original) The vent structure of claim 3 wherein the vent opening further comprises a plurality of openings disposed between the peripheral edge of the bottom plate and the first baffle.

6. (Original) The vent structure of claim 1 further comprising a flange affixed to a central portion of the bottom plate about the tank opening.

7. (Original) The vent structure of claim 6 wherein the tank opening is covered with a fine screen mesh.

8. (Original) The vent structure of claim 2 wherein the tank opening is disposed centrally within the bottom plate and is encompassed by the third baffle.

9. (Original) The vent structure of claim 1 further comprising one or more support columns positioned within the vent structure between the vent opening and the tank opening, each support column extending between the cover and the bottom plate.

10. (Original) The vent structure of claim 9 wherein at least one of support columns has a terminal end that facilitates the locking of the cover to the bottom plate.

11. (Original) The vent structure of claim 10 wherein the terminal end is received and passed through a receptacle in the vent structure to protrude through to an exterior portion of the vent structure, whereby a locking mechanism may be selectively affixed to the protruding terminal end.

12. (Original) The vent structure of claim 11 wherein a guard is affixed about the receptacle in the vent structure on an exterior portion thereof for protecting the locking mechanism.

13. (Original) The vent structure of claim 12 wherein each support column adapted for receiving a locking mechanism depends from the cover toward the receptacle in the bottom plate, the guard extends outward from the bottom plate to form a barrier around the locking mechanism.

14. (Original) The vent structure of claim 2 wherein the vent structure is cylindrical such that the baffles form concentric rings about the tank opening.

15. (Original) The vent structure of claim 1 wherein a central portion of the bottom plate is affixed to a flange for attachment to the storage tank.

16. (Original) The vent structure of claim 1 wherein the storage tank is for storing water.

17. (Original) A vent structure for deterring intruder access to a water storage tank, comprising:

a bottom plate having a flange affixed about a tank opening formed within the bottom plate to allow gaseous flow between an atmosphere in the water storage tank and an atmosphere within the vent structure when connected to the water storage tank;

a cover affixed above and to the bottom plate thereby forming the vent structure housing;

a vent openings formed through the bottom plate to allow gaseous flow between the vent structure's atmosphere and an ambient atmosphere surrounding the water storage tank; and

a tortuous pathway within the vent structure disposed between the vent opening and the tank opening to allow gaseous communication between the water storage tank atmosphere and the ambient atmosphere surrounding the storage tank, further the tortuous pathway being formed by a plurality of baffles having at least one baffle extend upward from the bottom plate toward the cover and at least one baffle depend downward from the cover toward the bottom plate.

18. (Original) The vent structure of claim 17 further comprising one or more support columns positioned within the vent structure between the vent opening and the tank opening, each support column extending between the cover and the bottom plate wherein at least one of support columns has a terminal end that is received and passed through a receptacle in the vent structure to protrude through to an exterior portion of the vent structure whereby a locking mechanism may be selectively affixed to the protruding terminal end.

19. (Original) The vent structure of claim 18 wherein each support column adapted for receiving a locking mechanism depends from the cover toward the receptacle in the bottom plate, a guard for protecting the locking mechanism extends outward from the bottom plate to form a barrier around the locking mechanism.

20. (Original) A system for protecting water within a water storage tank from an intruder using the vent structure of claim 17 comprising affixing the vent structure to the water storage tank atmospheric vent.